

**Designing guidelines for product's self-marketing. Case:
creating a graphic print design for Bagnanas bag.**

Malgorzata Pilch

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Author or authors Malgorzata Pilch	Group or year of entry 2010
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<p>Design and marketing are interconnected. The two disciplines at first seem to deal with very different areas of expertise, but are in fact connected in many ways, particularly when looking at a role of design in marketing. The specific focus of the thesis is on visual marketing and graphic design.</p> <p>A common feature of both marketing and design is communication. The main goal of the two disciplines is to convey the desired message to a specified target group in order to influence its emotions, attitudes, choices and behaviour. Visual communication is a process of thinking, planning and translating ideas into visual messages that are understood by the target audience. In order to communicate a message that is understandable, the same visual language has to be used. Thus, a vast knowledge of cultures, preferences and desires of potential customers is necessary.</p> <p>The purpose of the theoretical part of this product-oriented thesis was to present the connection between marketing and design, to explain the significance of design in marketing and to present the design and cognitive factors that enhance marketing effectiveness, thus making a product more attractive to consumers.</p> <p>The ultimate goal of the project was to create a graphic print design for a cotton bag carrying the Bagnanas brand, which is owned by Wanamakers Oy creative agency. In order to create the final product, the latest textile design and consumer trend forecast listings were collected. The existing print models of the brand were analysed in order to ascertain the best-sellers and factors influencing their popularity. The print design was created based on the relevant theoretical knowledge, the steps of the designing process, the combining of trends, the most attractive features of Bagnanas best-sellers and the designer's own vision.</p> <p>The final design, in a format allowing its direct application, will be presented to the commissioning party for evaluation and production.</p>	
Keywords Design, graphic design, visual marketing, visual communication	

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1 Introduction

Design is an integral part of visual marketing and an ultimate tool for capturing customers' attention and interest in a product. Visual perception is a significant factor in buyers' decision-making process in the world full of shapes, colours and styles that appeal to every individual strongly yet differently. Visual features of a product are one of the main aspects the potential customer notices and often depending on the visual impression the product makes he/she makes a decision of purchase. The design of an item in question is the first thing to communicate the message and to attract potential customers. Marketers need to be aware of the importance of design in modern marketing and know how to utilize certain graphic elements and current trends according to the purpose and relevance with the product.

The aim of this product-oriented thesis project is to present the connection between marketing and design and the importance of this relationship, as well as the factors of graphic design influencing consumers' perception of a product. The theory is turned into practice by creating a design of a print for a cotton bag labeled with Bagnanas brand.

1.1 Background information

Being interested in marketing and in design and arts as well as in environmental issues I was searching for a project to work on possibly combining all these aspects. After becoming familiar with the Bagnanas brand in December 2012 the idea of designing a bag print for them was born and eventually evolved to the thesis topic. The choice of the commissioning party seems to be right since the company, introduced more precisely later in this chapter, meets perfectly the scope of my interests.

Design is an integral part of visual marketing and plays an important role in the process of attracting customers and selling products. Being interested in relationship of these two – marketing and design, I decided to explore the factors most significant in the process of applying the design elements to products which are to become successful. Creatives being one of my interests and passions it become clear that I would use my

skills to create a design of a print and make it ready to be used directly on the Bagnanas bag.

1.2 Objectives of the project

The main objective of the project is creating a print design for Bagnanas cotton bag, which is the final product of this product-oriented thesis. The goal is to design a graphic print that follows certain designing rules, attracts customers, that reflects the current trends and meets customers' expectations by communicating target message, and eventually aims to be a well-sellable and profit generating product.

However, in order to create a successful piece of print design it is necessary to collect the adequate materials regarding the topic, including designing rules and advices, results of previous studies, as well as current trends statements. Thus, one of the purposes of the thesis is to collect the information on how to choose and apply certain design elements in order to attract the consumer's attention. Based on these findings an example of a print is to be created.

Moreover, the thesis also includes an analysis of the most successful and bestselling existing bag prints of Bagnanas brand according to the theory presented in preceding chapters. That reveals if the success of the particular pieces of design of the brand coincides with the theoretical guidelines.

The main questions of the project are:

- What is the role of graphic design in marketing?
- What are the designing factors that make a product attractive to consumers and influence their purchase choices?
- How to implement the theoretical rules of design in a product in order to attract customers?

1.3 Demarcation

Since design and visual marketing topics are broad enough and can be studied from many different aspects, the limitations for this thesis project must be determined.

This project is a product oriented thesis therefore it does not include any new research but is based on previous findings and literature describing the problem in question. This means that I did not conduct any questionnaire in order to discover what are the factors deciding on the attractiveness of the products and to learn about the latest trends, but I rely on the existing materials and results.

The main objective of this project is to design a graphic pattern/print for a cotton bag, thus I focus on the topics escalating around the graphic design and its connections with marketing. The aspect of the role of design - as a broad and general matter - in marketing appears too, but it is narrowed when relating to the final product of the project. Therefore, presented trends refer to the trends in graphic design and fashion design concerning patterns, symbols, graphics and colours currently used, as well as general global consumer trends dependent on current social, economic and cultural situation.

The thesis objective clearly states what is its final product, which indicates that I was not to design a bag as a whole, but focus only on the pattern to be printed on it. The form of the bag stays default, as designed by the brand's creators and applied to all their products.

This thesis project does not include a detailed description of the process of the graphic print's creation, i.e. the step by step stages of designing the target product, methods and technics of creating a graphic and its further processing in the designing software. The technical aspect explanation is limited to a brief reporting of methods and tools used. Taking into consideration the main objective of the project, this limitation is reasonable since the emphasis should be put on the cognitive and business aspect of the design-marketing problem, thus focus on the choice of the visual elements influencing the consumers' perception and purchase decision.

One might be concerned why the focus of this thesis is on graphic design and not on textile design, for instance, since the project regards creation of a pattern/print for a bag being, naturally, a textile. That is because the final product is to be a graphic image

that communicates certain message, speaks the visual language of target audience and therefore sells well (cognition and economic wise). The aim for the product is to act as a marketer of its own, and as explained further there is a clear and strong connection between the two disciplines. Furthermore, the project excludes such elements of textile design as choice of fabric and printing method, which are default for all products of the commissioning party. This reasoning should clearly justify the approach of this thesis and its emphasis on graphic design.

1.4 The commissioning party

Wanamakers Oy is a design and promotion company based in Helsinki founded by Ruta Kirsnyte and Eetu Lipponen, currently ran by Ruta Kirsnyte and Thomas Löfström. As a creative agency Wanamakers specializes in innovative solutions in brand strategy and corporate identity, web design for small and medium businesses, interactive marketing and print media, as well as photo and video production services.

As one of the project of the company the owners created the Bagnanas brand offering a selection of cotton bags. The main objective of Bagnanas is producing the bags presenting great design and high quality that at the same time are ethical, both environmentally and trade-wise. In order to support local manufacturing, sustainable development and fair labour Bagnanas bags are made of certified organic and fair trade materials and produced in Europe, labelled with the Run Europe mark. The prints on the bags, the role of which is to show a story behind, a deeper meaning or latest trends, are designed by individual artists from around the World and the creators of the brand themselves. The method used for printing the pattern on the fabric utilized by the brand is called screen printing.

Examples of Bagnanas bag design models are attached in in Appendix 2.

1.5 Project approach & report structure

This product oriented thesis project consists of coherent theoretical and empirical parts covering the main problem of the project, where the theory supports the development of the final product.

The purpose of the theoretical part of this thesis is to explain what design and visual marketing are, and how the two disciplines are interconnected. Therefore, first, the concepts of design and visual marketing are explained followed by the description of the role of design and visual perception in marketing, its importance and meaning in the consumers' buying choices. Respectively, chapter 2 of this report explains the definition of design as a general term as well as its narrowed discipline, graphic design. Further, graphic design is presented as communication tool, and the process of designing is described. Chapter 3 is dedicated to marketing, where explanation of its purpose and the visual marketing term are provided. Relation between the two disciplines is described in chapter 4 which emphasizes the role of design in marketing. Also factors influencing consumers' selection process which affect the choice of graphic elements while designing a product/print in order to attract the potential buyers are presented.

Since the awareness of the current trends and preferences of consumers are highly important in creating a successful design item, the latest trends information based on the existing trend predictions is presented in chapter 5.

Further, in chapter 6, the analysis of sales data concerning existing best-selling/selected bag prints of Bagnanas brand is presented. The link between the above described theoretical rules of designing and the print designs can indicate how this theory, or some parts of it, works (or does not work) in practice; it presents what features applied already in these analysed bag prints might have attracted the customers and what factors actually might have made them successful.

Finally, having all the necessary information, a new print design was created along with the description of the implementation of gathered theory. The product development process is described in chapter 7. The attempt was to design a print according to the applicable rules, reflecting the trends, making the final product attractive to the consumers.

Chapter 8 stands as a conclusion of the report presenting the summary, the results of the project and suggestions for further study regarding the topic.

2 Design

This chapter defines how discipline of design is understood as a general term and explains what graphic design, being a focus of this report, is. Furthermore, graphic design is presented as a form of communication and a tool for conveying a desired message to the target audience, as well as the process of designing activity is described.

2.1 Design definition

Design as a term is being widely used nowadays. Fashion design, interior design, web design, product design, service design, industrial design are only some to list among the terms commonly known and distinguished. In order to understand the meaning of design a definition needs to be adduced.

Merriam-Webster (2014) online dictionary belonging to the Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc. defines design as follows:

1. design *verb*

- : to plan and make decisions about (something that is being built or created) : to create the plans, drawings, etc., that show how (something) will be made
- : to plan and make (something) for a specific use or purpose
- : to think of (something, such as a plan) : to plan (something) in your mind

2. design *noun*

- : the way something has been made : the way the parts of something (such as a building, machine, book, etc.) are formed and arranged for a particular use, effect, etc.
- : the process of planning how something will look, happen, be made, etc. : the process of designing something
- : a drawing of something that is being planned or created

A very similar explanation is presented by Oxford Dictionaries (2014) describing design as “a plan or drawing produced to show the look and function or workings of a building, garment, or other object before it is made”, “a decorative pattern”, ” purpose or planning that exists behind an action, fact, or object”, “[to] decide upon the look and functioning of (a building, garment, or other object), by making a detailed drawing of it” and “[to] do or plan (something) with a specific purpose in mind”.

Thus, following the definitions design as such is simply a process of planning, which makes it a very vast and general discipline. However, in today's society design is most often associated with just one aspect of its definition being a pattern or style, and this way linking it to the visual effect of the designing process and not the process itself.

Such interpretation reflects perfectly the objective of this project i.e. creating a pattern for a cotton bag, and therefore as such the term is hereby understood. Narrowing the terminology, graphic design, being one of main focuses of this thesis thus explained more widely in the following subchapters, directly influences the pattern creation as it concerns the process of creating a graphic image.

2.2 Concept of graphic design

Although graphic design as a term is commonly known and widely used, and the idea behind it is somewhat well understood by majority, there is no exact and only definition of graphic design existing. As noted in „Graphic Design as Communication” by Malcolm Barnard (2005, 1), many English dictionaries do not provide explanation of what graphic design is, or give unsatisfactory answers. According to the online Oxford Dictionaries graphic design relates to “the art or skill of combining text and pictures in advertisements, magazines, or books”. The definition is indeed very limited and not covering all the aspects of modern understanding of graphic design. Most importantly, the above definition does not include the scope of graphic design as understood for the purposes of this thesis.

In order to identify graphic design it is vital to examine the genesis of the term and its historical meaning. Traditional concept of graphic design relates to print, and the narrowed view of the term equates to “graphic crafts” and “graphic arts”, where “graphic” stands for style or technique (Downs, 2012). Such approach, however, also makes the concept be very limited and doesn't reflect its true modern meaning; over time along with new social needs and introduction of new technologies the concept was broadened.

Downs (2012, 1) explains the origins of the term “graphic” and its connection to “art” by quoting the definitions from the Oxford English Dictionary, which define graphics

as a technique of drawing, painting or engraving, and arts as a creative skill in drawing, painting, sculpture. He concludes that following this understanding graphic art means the act of skilful creation of something with drawing, painting and printing – it is a process of graphic craft. Downs draws attention to the observation that “the process of making graphics is not the same as communicating graphically” (2012, 2) relating to interpreting graphic design rather as graphic communication – which is described separately in chapter 2.3.

In the same source it is noted also that the traditional concept of graphic design linked particularly to the printing technology limits significantly its use in modern times where audiovisual and multimedia means arose. That is why the understanding of the phenomenon and its definition must constantly evolve. While along the technological development tools for executing graphic design change, its another traditional meaning is still the same – graphic design is visualisation. Thus its core purpose remains the same regardless the changing eras. (Downs 2012, 9.)

Malcolm Barnard (2005) attempts to explain the term of graphic design by separating the two words and bringing their etymology, too. “Graphic” deriving from ancient Greek “mark-making” and “design” meaning drawing, planning and sketching (as explained earlier in chapter 3) with its roots in Latin “mark” combined together create a term involving a process of creation of drawn marks. There is a strong emphasis on the mark drawing aspect as it is common for both “graphic” and “design” definitions, which indicates also graphic design’s connection to art. Following the above understanding, the discipline, as Barnard notes, is quite vast and applies to a broad range of activities from the fields of communication arts, communication design, illustration and visual communication. (Barnard 2005, 10.)

Given the above definitions and term explanations graphic design can be summed up as visual planning and execution. It is also easy to notice that in majority of sources graphic design is associated with communication, and communication being one of major graphic design’s roles. The relation is described in the following subchapter.

2.3 Graphic design as communication

In the process of trying to find the universal definition for graphic design Malcolm Barnard (2005) cites several other authors and their theories, including those of Tibor Kalman (1991) and Richard Hollis (1994) referring to graphic design as visual communication. The theories say that graphic design is means of communication, an arrangement of words and images to convey an idea, a visual representation on anything and anywhere. Barnard (2005, 10-11) notes that such understanding does not exclude fine art, which should be considered as a separate category regarding significant difference between graphic design and artistic production. The difference is explained a bit later in this chapter, as the motive is present also in other sources.

Simon Downs (2012) goes even a step further and relates to modern graphic design as graphic communication and separates the two terms with full consciousness stating, as mentioned already in chapter 2.2, that communicating graphically is different than graphics making. The author explains that graphic communication is based on awareness and knowledge that people build meanings in life and identities on symbols and visual signs. Graphic communication shows people what they need to understand and in a way they can easily understand. Down (2012, 4) says that “graphic communication is the process through which we can decode the visual culture of those we need to communicate with; it is the process of planning a response; it is the process of making a solution”. A graphic designer of modern times has to satisfy not only the needs of a client, but also, or maybe at first place, needs and expectations of end users. Graphic communication is a challenging process of thinking, planning and translating the ideas into visual messages that are understood by the target audience. It means that graphic designer has to have a vast knowledge of basically everything, know the world, cultures and meaning of symbols in order to use the right tools and communicate the right way. (Downs 2012, 4-7.)

Frascara (1997, 3-5) defines visual communication design as an activity that is meant to affects people’s knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. But in order to do so it has to be detectable, understandable and attractive to the audience, the perception of which depends on specific factors, like culture, environment, age and education, among others. That is why, as Frascara explains, a graphic designer should build his visual work on

the knowledge about the target audience he aims to communicate with, its preferences, values and cognitive abilities, and be able to conduct the message in the visual and cultural language of the audience instead of expressing his own style and preferences.

Both Barnard (2005) and Frascara (1997) emphasise that graphic designer and artist are not the same, and the two must be distinguished from one another. As mentioned in previous paragraphs one of main differences lies in the content of communicated message or more precisely the focus on preferences, style and perception of the author him-/herself versus audience and/or client. Also Ryan Hembree (2006, 12) uses similar arguments explaining that graphic design is not the same as fine art although the same tools of drawing, painting or photographing are often used. The purposes of piece of art and design are different. Artists create based on their own feelings and opinions expressing their own vision and emotions while graphic designers serve the public - both client in need of visual message to communicate and the addressed audience. Moreover, art is open to individual interpretation whereas design must conduct a particular clear and commonly understandable message. In this sense art is subjective and design is objective.

Another crucial difference is, as presented by Malcolm Barnard (2005, 11), that graphic design stands for commercial use and its purpose is to be reproduced and made accessible to the masses. It is meant to be affordable and easy to reach. Pieces of fine art, on the other hand, are usually unique, exclusive, and therefore often expensive and accessible only to limited audience. Moreover, Barnard indicates that graphic design linked directly to mass production and common accessibility is, besides a form of communication, also a form of culture.

Graphic design has an enormous power of influencing people's cognition and behaviour if the message is communicated in the right manner. According to Ryan Hembree (2006) graphic design serves as an effective communication making complex issues easy to understand. It is a tool for information, instruction and propaganda; "properly executed, graphic design identifies, informs, instructs, interprets, and even persuades viewers to do something." It is also noted that when poorly or wrongly executed

graphic design can cause mass confusion, thus it is highly important that sender and receiver of a message speak the same visual language. (Hembree 2006, 11-27.)

2.4 Designing process

As mentioned in previous chapters design is a process of planning and creating a visual message. There are certain steps and phases designers follow in order to keep the order and consistence of a project and eventually achieve a desired effect. These phases are described in this chapter.

“The Complete Graphic Designer” by Ryan Hembree (2006, 39-41) regards the graphic designing process as exploring, searching for solutions, discovering ideas and experimentation all leading to solving visual communication problem and communicating the intended message to the target audience in the “right” way. Hembree notes that every designer may have a different way to work on a design project best for him-/herself, however there are particular steps involving crucial skills all designers should share – research, writing and drawing. The author distinguishes following phases of designing process: problem discussion (research), brief development, concept development, refinements and execution, and final implementation. Designer has to “quickly adapt, understand, and respond to the needs of the client” (Hembree 2006,41) in order to approach the problem correctly, which is why an early research and examining the problem from different angles is essential in the process.

Dabner, Calvert and Casey (2010, 10-15) emphasize that early research and constant broadening of horizons is an essential element of every designer’s work. In order to be able to respond wide audience’s needs designer has to be aware of current affairs and global events, explore the work of other design professionals, learn about latest technological developments and cultural trends, because they all influence the designing approach and successful communication.

Research, being the first step in the designing process, helps to understand the client, its goals and values, background, unique features and target audience. It narrows the scope of motives and options that might be utilized in the design solution, gives an insight of how a message can possibly be communicated, and generates appropriate

ideas. In order to succeed in the process and communicate a message the way it should and is expected to be conducted, designer needs to become not only an expert in his own field, graphic design, but also in the business field of a client as well as understand the needs of audience. Research may include familiarizing with the website of a client, its annual reports and publications, previous graphic design work, direct contact with its employees in form of meetings and interviews, as well as learning about the industry. Defining the target audience and its needs is crucial in every design project, as naturally the audience is the receiver of the communicated message. Knowing the audience, its preferences, values and perceptions - meaning its visual language - is extremely important in order to develop an understandable visual vocabulary that is appealing to the viewer. Also demographics including age, gender, education, cultural background, as well as such aspects like job type, interests and living environment influence significantly the design choices of colours, shapes, motives and symbols, typography etc. It is vital to understand that different groups of people depending on the above factors translate visual messages differently, often in a contrasting manner. Designing process is like a puzzle, where all the elements fit together and create an entity that provides most appropriate design solution for the problem. Therefore a comprehensive and broad research plays an important role as it helps defining a visual problem to be challenged. (Hembree 2006, 42-45.)

Researching the topics escalating around the design problem on his/her own and building a framework of possible solutions and ideas is just one side of what designer bases his work on. The other one is a design brief provided by a client who aims at communicating a visual message. Based on a brief designer learns about the problem from the client's perspective, about what the client wants to communicate, what are the objectives, budget and time limit, and most importantly what effect should the design bring and what target audience it is to address. (Hembree 2006, 46-47.)

As Hembree (2006, 48) emphasises, the concept development phase is the most important part of designing process when all the ideas are being generated, written down and only then translated into visuals. While brainstorming, all the ideas that come to designer's mind should be recorded in writing regardless if they seem irrelevant at a given moment as the aim of the process is to narrow the possible solutions and elimi-

nate those not applicable. There is also a reason for writing down the ideas instead of developing them visually from the beginning, which is explained by the fact that it is easier to put abstract and complex ideas into words rather than pictures. Working a lot with words makes designers also great copywriters, as by expanding their vocabulary they are able to capture the essence of ideas in the most accurate way. Hembree (2006, 49) lists several techniques for idea development, including free word writing associated with the problem in question, idea tree that connects the ideas to each other creating a consistent entity, use of dictionary for expanding the vocabulary and this way providing more visual clues for further development, as well as combining unlikely ideas that eventually lead to unexpected, most creative and unique results.

Having narrowed the scope of ideas designer's next step is to translate them into images by drawing. That is another essential skill every designer should possess. In this phase using pen and paper instead of graphic software is more efficient and effective as by drawing concepts can be visualized much quicker and easily adjusted with the right perspective, composition, shapes, lines and colours. Presenting the sketches rather than, or additionally to, written concepts to the client helps them realize how the final design might look like according to the designer's vision and allows possible corrections and suggestions to the concept. Creating several visual options for every concept, sketching a number of small thumbnails and experimenting with combinations of various elements allows a designer to analyse and determine the idea's validity, which results in time saving and better concept development. Only then, when the final idea is approved and possible changes applied the project moves to the graphic program where it is precisely executed and carefully polished. The process is however often more complex as designer has to strive to produce a design that combines his/her vision, objectives of the client and needs of target audience, which requires numerous adjustments and compromises. Nevertheless, the goal is to achieve a satisfying visual result that communicates the intended message, and this aspect has to be always kept as a priority. (Hembree 2006, 50-55.)

The process of designing from its early to final stages is presented similarly also by Dabner et al. (2010, 10-33), where following steps are distinguished: research, linear reasoning and lateral thinking – a stage where all strategic brainstorming occurs; draw-

ing and translating ideas into sketches, organizing and finalizing the project. Designing act is a complex process where numerous factors need to be taken into account, analyzed and appropriately applied. Huge emphasis is put on conducting a deep research of all project subject related aspects, as explained already in earlier paragraphs; it is said that “research into audiences is a primary tool of effective design” (Dabner et al. 2010, 26), it influences the later stages of the process and its overall success.

3 Visual marketing

Similarly to design as a general term, marketing is also a vast discipline covering a number of more specific subcategories – including visual marketing. This chapter explains what are the principles of marketing as in general followed by a narrowed definition and role of visual marketing, which is, keeping in mind the objectives of this thesis, a logic focal point and natural thought continuation.

3.1 Purpose of marketing

Kotler and Armstrong (2013) define marketing as “managing profitable customer relationships” and more widely “the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return” (2013, 27). The authors note that marketing is still nowadays associated by many just with advertising and selling, which may be justifiable as these activities are most noticeable and obvious for the audience. Naturally, the ultimate target of every business is to sell; however, scope of marketing goes far beyond that; it is a complex process leading to successful sales. It is important to understand that today’s marketing’s core objective is to satisfy customers’ needs and fulfil their expectations, which eventually effects in increased benefits for the company. The goal of marketing is to create added value for customers and build long-lasting relationships with them. Also defining target market is crucial in order to approach the audience in appropriate way, understand its needs and develop a working marketing strategy. (Kotler & Armstrong 2013, 24-27.)

3.2 Visual marketing principles

Visual marketing is an element of the wide discipline of marketing involving vision science, cognitive psychology and social psychology, the role of which is to stimulate consumers’ attention and perception, and to influence consumer behaviour. It is a strategic implementation of visual symbols and signs in order to deliver the desirable and understandable message to the target audience, requiring the understanding of the motivation and emotion that leads to particular consumer behaviour. (Wedel & Pieters, 2008, 2-4.)

Wedel and Pieters (2008) note that all of us as customers are constantly exposed to visual messages companies communicate with us in form of graphic advertisements, packaging, corporate identity, billboards, websites etc. Using visual aids makes sales more effective as humans are extremely sensitive to visual stimuli. Visual perception influences customers' behaviour, shapes their opinions and long-lasting impression of given product or organization. Thus, in order to influence customers' perception positively and deliver desirable messages to them companies invest a lot in a strategy of using the right symbols, images and signs as well as other graphic elements including colours, shapes, forms and textures.

Vision science is tightly interconnected with cognitive psychology, thus whatever human eye sees is being immediately translated into particular meaning influenced by previous experiences or cultural factors. Customer's cultural and demographical background plays a crucial role in how particular visual element influences his/her perception and what kind of impression it draws, therefore marketers must always consider this aspect when developing visual communication materials. It becomes clear that visuals are highly important in the process of building customer relationships and successful marketing, making visual marketing one of crucial marketing disciplines.

The role of senses in marketing and their influence on decision-making was widely studied throughout the last years, yet it is still a relatively new discipline and should be profoundly examined. As a short explanation, sensory marketing regards five sensory aspects of products being touch, taste, smell, sound and look. The relation between senses and consumer marketing is well described in "Sensory Marketing" book edited by Aradhna Krishna (2010) collecting writes of each category's authorities. Sensuality of products, including visual impression, is highly significant in consumers' relation towards them; highlighting it and using it in appropriate way makes a product more appealing, attractive and desirable. Sensory perceptions affect consumers' liking and purchase decisions. It happens this way because human senses are primal and reactions to the sensory stimuli are automatic, natural and subconscious. Thus, when sensual attributes of marketed products are either created, enriched or highlighted, it works like a trigger for affecting consumers' emotions, preferences and opinions. (Krishna 2010, 1-4.)

Visual perception plays an important role among all the sensual attributes in the process of attracting customers and influencing their attitude, emotions and eventual consumption. The fact Chris Janiszewski (2008, 277) draws attention to is that recently images in forms of printed advertisements, television commercials and visual merchandising communicate meaning to the audience much more effectively than words, and significantly influence sales. Visual elements influencing consumers' attention are described in chapter 4.3 of this report.

4 Design and marketing connections

Design and marketing connect in many ways and aspects, but the first assumption drawn as learned from the previous chapters is that what connects graphic design and marketing is communication. The main role of both design and marketing activities is to communicate the message, to convey the idea behind and make it understandable to the audience. Both stand as a bridge between the one communicating a message and one to receive it. This chapter is to explain the connection and the way of interaction of the two disciplines.

4.1 Role of design in marketing

The two disciplines are interconnected, especially when looking at the dependence of marketing on design. The design's support of marketing communication is enormous as it provides all the visual characteristics so significant in building brand's image and recognition in the market. Margaret Bruce and Lucy Daly (2007) explain that design is essential for businesses to build success and competitiveness, to enter new markets and reach new customers. They note that design allows creating a product that captures attention of new clients, it allows communicating the quality and value to the customer and, most importantly, good design lets the product differentiate in the market filled with similar goods, makes it distinguishable and recognizable. "The design process refers to the planning and decision-making activities entailed in giving form to a product or corporate communications" (Bruce & Daly 2007.) Both design and marketing are responsible for fulfilling the needs and demands of consumers, and design should be seen as an integral and essential activity in the process of building brand's image, increasing credibility and enhancing business performance.

As stated by Design Council (2007, in Bruce & Daly 2007), different role players in business can invent, build and make the products work, including marketers selling them, but only designers can "turn a concept into something that's desirable, viable, commercially successful and adds value to other people's lives". Design has a strategic and commercial value in business, as when used with its full potential it is able to increase and speed up efficiency of marketing efforts and practically reduce the time to market (Bruce & Daly 2007). In fact, design – including graphic design - possesses the

power to market itself, which is due to its visual impact on consumers' sensual perception. Design directly influences consumers' emotions and attitude towards a product creating an immediate first impression and affecting purchase decision. Thus, it is logical to assume that well managed design is a crucial milestone to the success of overall marketing activities of every business.

Regarding the role of design in marketing the two disciplines connect often and in many ways in order to produce a desired result, therefore in a business environment specialists of the two disciplines have to interact and cooperate. The matter is described in the following subchapter.

4.2 Marketer-designer cooperation

In order to create a desired business result and communicate a visual message effectively to the target audience marketing and design specialists must cooperate.

Design is a part of company's marketing strategy aiming at effective marketing communication and successful sales outcome. It is designer's role to create the visuals of a product, corporate identity or promotional materials; however, as mentioned already in chapter 3.4, design is based on a brief provided by a client. Every business knows its target market best, knows what are the needs and expectations of its customers, and first of all what kind of message is to be communicated to the audience through design. Alan Swann (1990, 92) notes that often a market research and throughout investigation of consumers' preferences are necessary to determine the right approach of design production. People's preferences and expectations evaluate and change frequently, thus it is important to be aware of the latest trends and therefore to investigate the market on a regular basis. The importance of trends in the designing process and marketing communication is described more widely in chapter 6 along with a report of most recent trending attributes and elements of graphic and fashion design.

Swann (1990, 94) emphasizes also that creating the right design style for particular target market is highly important in order to succeed. Depending on the characteristics and demands of the market a communication problem is to be solved using a set of varying design elements that are clear and do not cause misunderstandings. Swann

(1990, 96-139) presents several case studies regarding design solutions for four different target audiences: mass, youth, sophisticated, and uncategorized special needs markets. The purpose of the cases is to show how individual design approaches can solve marketing communication problems.

According to Bruce and Daly (2007) marketing specialists deal a lot with design in their regular work time regardless of their main focus in either service, retail or production environment. Design changes are necessary to be implemented in order to fill the market gaps every time when market trends or know-how development arises causing a change in consumers' taste. Furthermore, "technological developments in material, information technology and so on are captured in new designs and open up new market possibilities", thus marketers rely on design solutions for enhancing the overall business strategy. Especially image-creation related actions, like entering new markets, rebranding, or merge of two firms, require interference of graphic design, in particular. Design vision and its way of perceiving the market situation also brings specific insights to the market research regarding understanding and empathy towards user needs, which leads to developing better and unique products, services and more effective communication.

Regarding how business and design specialists cooperate in practice Bruce and Daly (2007) indicate that design experts can be an integral part of team located in-house, the service can be outsourced from a specialized design company, or alternatively it can be a mix of the above. Outsourcing design activities is nowadays most popular and is a common practice among businesses though. Regardless of the base of design expertise, it is important that marketer and designer have a mutual understanding of the purpose and goals of the project they work on; specifically, marketers need to choose such designers to cooperate with who are able not only to understand their vision but share and enhance it. It is also stated that long-lasting relationships between designer and client company bring more effective marketing outcomes, simply because the mentioned objectives understanding increases along time. Nevertheless, the cooperation might be difficult sometimes.

Designers and marketers have “different educational backgrounds, professional identities, working tools and attitudes” (Svengren Holm & Johansson 2005, in Lindahl & Nordin, 2010) and as default “marketing often relies on a rational, scientific and profit-based approach, whereas the designer relies on talent, creative skill and intuition” (Beverland 2005, in Lindahl & Nordin 2010), which might make the integration between the two disciplines difficult. Lindahl and Nordin (2010) note, however, that the differences imposing some compromises are usually beneficial for the overall result having an effect in creating an improved and unique product and generating higher sales.

4.3 Design factors to influence perception

Living in the visual world and being surrounded by millions of visually stimulating objects at any given moment and any given place, marketing by visual means is the easiest way to approach consumers and influence their purchase decisions. However, not every product attracts attention and interest of consumers in the same way. As Tavassoli (2008, 73) notes, “consumers visually select specific objects as the targets of their actions, while avoiding and ignoring others”. Depending on various factors some products are seen as interesting to some, and others are uninteresting. The phenomenon is based on visual perception and interpretation of visual signs and symbols, as can be concluded from the previous chapters. But what actually makes some products more attractive visually than others?

Tavassoli (2008, 74-78) explains that while visual objects constantly compete for attention human selective attention system allowing focusing on task-relevant information and ignoring irrelevant items complemented by emotional system affects consumers’ decision-making and liking. People tend to have more positive attitude towards things they are familiar with, thus re-experiencing similar visual stimuli effects in selecting it automatically and unconsciously. It is also said that emotional reactions may guide actions and selection decisions, and modify the way particular object was originally perceived. Nevertheless, “people also automatically and preattentively evaluate objects with respect to active goals in order to orient attention and guide behavior toward objects that satisfy a goal” (Tavassoli 2008, 77). In other words, consumers have a tendency to be attracted by visuals that respond their particular needs at a given time and

situation, which on the other hand depend on multiple other factors. Objects that do not fit the frame in such case are simply ignored.

“By understanding how viewers initially analyse an image, designers can structure and organize a graphic so it compliments human perception” (Malamed 2009, 45). Perceiving visual impulses starts already at cognitive unconscious level, when objects appear in visual field but are still beyond intentional attention of a viewer. Only such factors as prior knowledge, expectations or goals allow the object to the next level of actual attention and interest. In order to take advantage of such preattentive processes, i.e. early vision, and make a viewer become interested in particular visual object designers emphasize its primitive features, either colours, orientation, motion, size, shape, or other unique property that would make the object distinct among others.

Position of graphic elements in a design in accordance with the direction of eye movement principle, which tends to be from left top to the right and then down, as well as using location signalling cues, like arrows, highlights, colours or lines, allows controlling the direction of viewer’s attention. Positioning in a certain frame is viewed in a hierarchic way, where elements on the top are seen as most important, and also more active, dynamic and of greater potential when located on top half rather than in the lower part. (Malamed 2009, 71-80.) Another aspect concerns movement and dynamics caught in a static graphic piece, which are interpreted similarly to active motion and based on the rhythm of elements. By picturing motion designers can manipulate viewer’s perception direction and draw the attention to the important elements of a graphic. It is interesting that left-to-right movement is perceived easier regardless the cultural differences regarding directions. Also, it is vital to mention that in 3D perspective elements placed in the foreground are naturally perceived as more important than the distant ones. (Malamed 2009, 86-89.)

Attention is intuitively and subconsciously directed to the objects, elements or features that are most salient. Malamed (2009, 82) explains that the main principle of composition in visual design is focal point – an element that draws immediate attention being e.g. the largest shape, brightest element, the one that is isolated or distinct in any other way. Human brains automatically search for differences, which explains why distinct

elements draw most attention. Contrasts attract viewer's attention – either contrasting colours, shapes, sizes or placing irrelevant and unexpected element in certain familiar context.

Connie Malamed (2009, 92) also notes that people are automatically attracted to pictures of human faces, with a special attention to eyes. The reason for that phenomenon is that human beings are programmed to communicate, and eyes are a primal tool for interpersonal communication and emotions expression. Thus it is natural to turn the attention towards faces, and also look in the direction other's gaze is directed. Graphic designers can benefit from this relation by either simply using pictures of human faces in a visual message to grab general attention, or using them as a localization tool for directing viewer's attention towards particular target object.

Colour is a powerful tool to attract attention, too; it is safe to state that one of the most significant ones, in fact. It is one of the primitive features, thus often the first one to notice when looking at a graphic object. Colour guides attention, can reinforce a message and facilitate interpretation while also making an object memorable. First of all, colourful objects are more attractive than monochromic ones and more visible, distinguishable, which helps organize information in comprehensive and logic way, as well as make it easily detectable and understandable. (Malamed 2009, 100.) Different colours are often linked to particular symbolic meanings or certain emotions, therefore depending on the target message of design particular shades are used. Nevertheless, bright and intensive contrasting colours easily draw viewer's attention regardless their meaning, thus they are often used in design to emphasize the core element of visual message.

Along with the technical and cognitive aspects of designing graphically that help influencing the attention of audience there is one feature that characterizes good design. An emotional response it creates. Design that carries emotional features immediately grabs viewer's attention, stimulates interest, makes the audience be involved in decoding and understanding the message. Affective pictures also cause viewers look at them longer than at emotionally neutral graphics, i.e. the attention is stronger. Especially shocking or unusual and unconventional pictures, the aim of which is to influence attitude

change towards certain issue, draw most attention. The viewer is immediately affected by such visual as it is different, stands out and contributes to his/her own emotions or mood by triggering memories. The same principle regards also humour, amusement, entertainment or oppositely sadness, melancholy, anger and fear. (Malamed 2009, 203-227.) Malamed (2009, 208) says that “when a graphic has emotional salience, effective appeal is its prominent characteristic. It transmits emotional content in a compelling way. Designers can achieve this by composing with graphic elements and imagery that have significance to the audience.” Natural way to draw attention based on emotions is also utilizing visual narratives that communicate a story through a graphic picture, or using visual metaphors to stimulate imagination.

It is important to bear in mind that attention towards visual objects and eventual purchase decisions also depend on and are influenced by such factors as season, special events and occasions occurring at a given moment and place – either globally, locally or individually in the perceiver’s close environment; and numerous other initiators. The above described factors can nevertheless help understanding how the process of visual attention works and how to approach the audience with understandable and attractive design.

5 Trends

When creating a new piece of visual object designer has to bear in mind all the above described rules and objectives of visual communication, like preferences of target audience, its expectations and attitudes, or a common pattern followed in similar projects. Those are, nevertheless, closely related and interdependent on trends applicable at a given time. Being familiar with and following certain trends and particular fashion inspirations that the audience follows is an important factor in designing graphically appealing products.

Below there are described briefly the trends concerning fabric print design in matters of colour, patterns and general trending elements for the period of summer 2014 and winter 2014/2015 according to the Textile View Magazine (103/2013 & 104/2013) and View2 Magazine (14/2013). The listed trends are directly linked to fashion design as the reference sources focus on textile industry trend factors, which in fact influence the creation process of this thesis project's product.

Additionally, general consumer trends for the year 2014 are presented, as listed by trendwatching.com portal (2014).

5.1 Summer 2014

The leading theme for the summer 2014 is youth and all the related motives that make a person feel and look younger. As Textile View Magazine explains, there is a big rush towards the anti-age movement currently, thus everything that brings the feel of youthfulness becomes trendy now. As general themes in fashion for this stream the experts list romance, sports, 1970s festival, pink, florals, folklore, to list several.

Together with the change of seasons also the approach towards dressing changes allowing more creative freedom and impulsiveness, spontaneity and intuitive creative thinking. There is an emphasis on expressing oneself through abstract arts and street graffiti with a freestyle approach to fabric markings and prints. The colours to be on the top during summer 2014 escalate around primaries: red, cobalt and bright yellow, however aqua blue and classic black and white are also to be of major importance.

Other colours to mention are olive green, bubble-gum pink, nut brown and kelly green. A huge emphasis is put on prints in fashion design as general. All kind of graphic motives, like cartoon characters, gestural marks and big scale portraits, photographic digital prints and slogans are all allowed. The focus is on painterly and bold graphic patterns expressing avant-garde and apparent mismatch. (Textile View Magazine 104/2013, 68-73.)

As an opposite, a trend for feminine simplicity and clarity arises. Textile View Magazine (104/2013, 74-79) mentions prettiness, freshness and contemporary detailing and domination of white, bubble-gum pink, pale peach, fuchsia and mint green shades combines with aluminium, lavender grey and black as a coming trend. The emphasis is put on delicate mixes of fabric and pattern, which is noticed well only when looked close. Trending elements are lace, contemporary florals, plains and semi-plains, as well as minimalism with technical details in fabric form, like motive of origami, curves, zig-zags, multilayers and pleats giving 3D effect.

Another subtle approach comes with colours of low-key palette including shades of off-white, navy, grey, stone, dove, buttermilk, taupe, putty, cement, black, and indigo, giving a sophisticated and luxurious touch. There is not much space for patterns and graphic prints in this approach, as an emphasis is on simplicity and classic elegance. (Textile View Magazine 104/2013, 81-85.)

Nevertheless, patterns are an important element in the summer trends, featured also in other styling sets presented by Textile View (104/2013, 86-97). Tropical florals mixed with deco decadence, glam and sparkle all in dark colours of pewter, bronze, copper, old gold, teal, russet, purple, dark blue and magenta bring rich new look to summer, while nature-inspired shades of black, dark brown, blood red, russet orange, sludge green, olive, chestnut and ochre combined with ethnic elements like feathers, beads, shells and symmetrical ornaments symbolize female strengths of tribal culture.

5.2 Winter 2014/2015

According to the Textile View Magazine (103/2013, 101) currently occurring technological advancement, experimentation and unity between contrasts inspire also design,

which reflects in trends for winter 2014/2015. The main motive is to create something brand new by combining opposites, by experimenting with digital printing, using innovative fabric construction techniques and blending colours as if the pigments were mixed with a brush.

Several inspirations for this season are specified, including intrinsic utility based on simplicity, purity, timeless beauty and combination of comfort and modern accent, where the main colours escalate around greys with support of string colour and indigo navy blues. Similar motives of beauty, aesthetics and fragility create the inspiration where the main focus is on human form and personality. Light, stretchy and transparent fabrics emphasizing body line are to be used along with lace and embossed imprints. Delicate shades of shell pinks, orchid lavender, opal blue, rose tan, chocolate brown and skin tones play an important role in achieving the uncovered effect of design.

Another theme, inspired by the impact humans have on nature, survival and hybrid between urban and country world, bring giant shapes, multifunctionality and heavy materials. Dominant colour palette here includes olives, mossy greens, blackened spruce, rust browns and sulphur yellows accented with little purple and turquoise. All the above are to create a protective effect.

As mentioned above, the technological development and innovation will have a significant influence on winter trends, which is visible in another inspiration emphasizing new forms and structures, 3D, transparency, blur and digital prints, with colours based on contrasting deep black and bright white, intense mineral blue, navy, silvery greys, aqua, celadon green and opalescent peachy glimmer. Oppositely, historical motives also have an impact on future trends. Costumes, decorations, surreal elements including pagan masks, skulls, occult motives, butterflies and surrealist imaginary all are to be included in winter designs providing a dark and mysterious feel. The goal is to merge present and past, religion and science, and experiment in art styling. Rich and heavy palette of colours combines woody browns, pewter, candle fit gold, amethyst, black, orchid, smoky blue and khaki.

Clash of feminine and male worlds being another design inspiration, the winter season will present some solutions where ceremonial, legal and ritual traditions as well as military motives might play a significant role. Man's wardrobe's content is to be blended into feminine fashion elements with emphasis on classic accents and colours of navy, black and white, charcoal, oyster, silver grey and metallics. As a contrast, another feminine look, inspired by haute couture, arises as a trend for the coming winter 2014/2015. Focusing on a silhouette, fabulous finishing, well-thought sculpting and strong, bright colours such approach is to present modernity and attract young audience. The palette includes petrol blues, strong red, cameo pink, saffron yellow, mustard, cream, fresh mid blue and plum. (Textile View Magazine 103/2013, 102-115.)

In addition to the above trend inspirations, according to the View2 magazine's (14/2013, 182-191) casualwear forecast for winter 2014/2015 the popular motives will concern dance related colours, like blues, taupe browns and caramels, and other elements; ping pong and tennis themed prints; as well as alpine folk motives combined with baroque style and rich colours mixing frivolity with traditional elements. Furthermore, it is stated that "electro house" theme being a mix of sci-fi, wired-in trends, future and space fascination and 1980s, with a blend of vibrant and bright colours in a dipped graduated dye effect, is to be one of the trends for the season along with the wildness theme inspired by "The Hobbit" and "Games of Thrones". The last one is characterized by rugged, warrior and pagan style with organic and neutralized touch, earthy and peaty green colours, simple ethnic patterns and animal head prints.

5.3 Consumer trends 2014

Regardless the industry and focus of operations the aim of every business is to communicate effectively with its customers, which is dependent on being aware and understanding consumers' needs, expectations and desires. The trendwatching.com portal, being an independent trend firm scanning global trends, business insights and ideas, composed a list of consumer trends for the year 2014, which are estimated to influence liking and consumption decisions.

The below presented trends, being a reflection of current social, economic and cultural matters, might affect also the perception and purchase decisions of customers of design sector.

Trendwatching.com (2014) lists seven trends to be valid in 2014, as follows: guilt-free status, crowd-shaped, made greener by/for China, mychiatry, no data, the internet of caring things, global brain.

“Guilt-free status” means sustainable consumption. As trendwatching.com explains, consumers are more and more aware of the damage consumption causes to the environment, society and consumers themselves. It is time now to create products and services that do not cause guilt, which in practice means clearly sustainable, ethical and healthy produce.

“Crowd shaped” trend is explained as utilizing by businesses the knowledge of crowd-aggregated data about consumers’ preferences to create and improve products and services that meet the demands. Thanks to vast usage of social media, ecommerce, smartphone GPS services and other network tools consumers constantly connect and share their preferences, needs and opinions with others, which creates a huge data pool to be utilized by companies.

Another trend for 2014 related to environmental issues named “made greener by/for China” addresses a change in the attitude towards Chinese environmental development. China, still by many seen as opposite to green-minded, is predicted to be noticed as central innovative and environmentally fast-developing market challenging the rest of the world in this matter.

“Mychiatry” trend is a continuation of technological fascination and broad usage of smartphones and other every-day tech gadgets for lifestyle assistance. As explained by trendwatching.com, physical health monitoring by smart-gadgets trend is to be extended and focused more on mental wellbeing. Thus, on one hand consumers will be more considerate about their mental health, and on the other – more and more apps and devices will enter the market for self-service lifestyle control.

Following a year of numerous cases of data leakage and privacy issues 2014 is foreseen to be “no data” year. It is a time of opportunities for companies and brands that could offer superior service with no need to collect excessive amounts of consumers’ personal data.

Another trending matter listed by trendwatching.com, “the internet of caring things” is a phenomenon trending already in 2013 regarding innovations in creating objects and devices that are connected and synchronized to work together. New aspect in this matter is “caring”, meaning that there will be many innovations coming concerning connected products that help and facilitate consumers’ daily activities, like monitoring or improving health, helping to save money or organize chores.

Finally, trendwatching.com emphasizes that consumer arena gradually becomes more and more global, thus it is expected that businesses presenting new products should bear in mind the needs and expectations of worldwide audience.

6 Bagnanas best-sellers

This chapter presents the analysis of sales of chosen best-selling models of Bagnanas bags. The analysis is based on sales data provided by the owners of the brand and concerns 27 selected models of different graphic print each. As a default, there are always 50 pieces of each model produced, and in case of huge popularity another round is printed. The data table received from the commissioning party (Appendix 1 – data partially hidden due to confidentiality) contains the names and authors of particular print designs, release dates, sold-out dates, and number of pieces sold by 31.08.2013. The models are listed according to three different release dates being 1.08.2012, 2.11.2012, and 14.05.2013. Sold-out date concerns 21 models and indicates the date when first 50 pieces were sold-out, whereas number of pieces sold by 31.08.2013 is presented for 6 models of special summer colour edition.

Based on the available data the time between release date and sold-out date allows drawing conclusion how much time was needed for each model to sell 50 pieces and thus which models were most popular comparing to others. Due to confidentiality no time frames are mentioned, only the result is revealed.

Further, analysis of possible factors deciding on the popularity of particular prints is made based on the theoretical indicators gathered in previous chapters. The attempt is to find out what features of these prints might have been crucial to make them be more attractive to customers than others.

6.1 Analysis result

Based on the data provided by Bagnanas the analysis of the period of time needed to sell 50 pieces of particular model indicates that the most popular prints of the brand are “Maristache: White” and “1000 Woofs”, followed by “3 is a Crowd: Black” and “Walk the Line: Black”, which recorded the shortest sale time out of all analysed prints. (Figure 1.)



Figure 1. Best-selling Bagnanas bags models according to the result of the analysis

Released earlier than their black versions, models “3 is a Crowd: White” and “Walk the Line: White” recorded lower popularity with the sales period of 50 pieces being longer by respectively 25% and 70% comparing to “3 is a Crowd: Black” and “Walk the line: Black”. As a comparison of dark and light versions of the same print and the popularity lap between them the “Tweet” model is worth mentioning. “Tweet Black” was significantly more popular ranking 7th among all the models, while “Tweet White” (please see Appendix 2 for visual reference) has not been sold in 50 copies since its release.

Out of summer colours edition, the sales data of which concerns a period of 3 months, “Maristache” prints (Yellow, Blue and Coral respectively) seem to be more popular than “Mint Green”, “Bubble Pink” and “Ocean Blue”, the last one having been sold in least copies (Figure 2). However, the above recorded better sales result, in relation to time period, than several other models released earlier, including “Tame Me”, “Has Somebody Been There” and “To Ben and To Jerry”, which needed 3 times more time to sell out comparing to the top-sellers. Similar result concerns “Alice Växer Upp” and “I Could Wear This” models. (Figure 3.)



Figure 2. Bagnanas summer colours edition models in the popularity order



Figure 3. Bagnanas bags models which required three times more time than top-sellers to sell out

The models of Bagnanas bags which recorded the longest time of selling in 50 copies are “Organic”, “Matter of Fact” and “Rojo” with nearly 5 times longer period on the market than the best-sellers. “I Got It From My Mama: Rabbit”, “Indian Summer” and “Tuohi” required 4 times more time to sell-out. (Figure 4.)



Figure 4. Bagnanas bags models which recorded the longest sales time

6.2 Conclusions

Analysing the results presented above one can conclude that definitely the most popular print design of Bagnanas brand is “Maristache”. All the colour versions of this model have been selling very well, meaning that the printed motive successfully attracted the attention of consumers and made them buy the product. With reference to the gathered theory and designing factors described in previous chapters it is not difficult to notice that the most probable factor that catches attention in this print is human face and the motive of unusual combination of elements, as well as sense of humour of such image affecting the viewer’s emotions. In practice, the designer of this particular print pictured a face of well recognizable Marilyn Monroe with moustache. Such com-

bination immediately draws attention, as it is something different, unexpected or even shocking. The motive of moustache itself is also quite important as it was one of trending elements at a time of release of this bag model. The summer colours edition release seems to be a natural consequence of the popularity of the initial model. The season here is not without significance. Already the name indicates that the series was meant to be worn in the summer, thus the colours are very bright, vibrant and easily noticeable. A slightly lower popularity of models named “Mint Green”, “Bubble Pink” and “Ocean Blue” of the special edition might be explained by the prior popularity and customer’s familiarity with the “Maristache” model and the motive printed on the bag.

Besides “Maristache” other prints recorded a very similar sales result in relation of pieces sold-time period, deserving a title of best-sellers as well. It is quite easy to notice that those fast-selling models, “1000 woofs”, “3 is a Crowd: Black” or “Walk the Line: Black”, present abstract and unusual pictures, as well aim to communicate some certain message. The two first models picture animals characterised with human features, like standing on two legs and speaking/shouting, expressing their opinions. Such images are abstract and not realistic, and represent a deeper thought, thus they attract the attention and make the audience analyse them. “Walk the Line: Black”, on the other hand, is quite a simple graphic of horizontal lines, but with certain irregular curves, which give the effect of flow, movement, and changes the way the picture is perceived by the viewers. The irregularity differentiates this model and makes it easily noticeable. The common characteristic of the above bag models is also a simplicity of colours - the images are based on black and white with some exceptions of additional shades, which are however not too vibrant. As a contrast, the models with images combining several different colours are among those that required more time to sell-out. It might mean that customers of the brand pay more attention to meaningful and unusual, unexpected and abstract graphics rather than mixes of several colourful elements. Colour simplicity might be the key in this case.

Looking at the result of the sales analysis a clear conclusion can be drawn that bag models printed on black fabric are more popular than those produced from light material. Popularity of black colours might be justified simply by such personal preference of customers dependent on individual factors, however the reason might be also the

minority of black Bagnanas bags among all brand's products making them somewhat special and outstanding. The fact is that most of the brand's bag models are made of light (white/cream) fabric, thus black coloured models with light or colourful print on it attract more attention by being more visible.

There is no clear explanation why some of the Bagnanas bags required much more time to sell-out than the fast-selling thus assumed as most popular ones. An explanation might be that many from the models positioned last in the ranking with most time needed to sell out in 50 copies were released among the very first ones, at a start of brand's operations and when Bagnanas was not well-recognized yet. Along with time and brand's growing popularity, not only in Finland but also on international markets, new print designs released in the process were automatically selling better, as people tend to be more attracted to "new" and labelled with "just released" products.

The main conclusion drawn from the sales data of Bagnanas bags is that the brand's products have quite a universal character and such factors like season or special occasions do not have as significant influence on popularity and sales of particular models as expected. Although there were certain prints released before Christmas as a season-related product, like "Has Somebody Been There" and "I Could Wear This", the holidays motive did not cause these prints to become more popular at that time comparing to other models. The mentioned models were sold out only several months later, in an irrelevant season, which indicates that customers happened to buy them also in the term far from winter. In fact, the pictures printed on the bags are not strictly related to Christmas, thus customers' choice is justified. One could assume that customers of the brand rely on innovative ideas and outstanding, attention-catching and often humorous graphic motives.

7 Product development – graphic print design

7.1 Reference to the theory

In order to be successful a piece of graphic design needs to attract the attention of the target audience and tell the story that compels consumers making them buy the product. Its goal is to communicate a certain message, thus the graphic language should be understandable and easy to interpret. As the theory says, what links the disciplines of marketing and design is visual communication, and via design products are marketed, as design, being a visual feature, is a significant point of focus and attention. Following this logic, graphic design has a power to market itself as it itself is a communicator of a message. The goal of the final product of this thesis is to become a successful visual product that communicates with consumers, attracts their attention and thus is a marketer of its own.

Following the designing process steps described in chapter 2.4 creation of the final product of this project started from a research, which included learning about the commissioning party and their products and objectives, preferences of the brand's customers based on the best-sellers' analysis (chapter 6), as well as about the trends forecast for coming seasons (chapter 5).

Specifying a target audience is the key for successful communication. The target audience of Bagnanas brand is not very limited, as the form of a bag is quite universal and can be used by anyone regardless of age, gender or cultural background. Also the target use is pretty vast and dependant on the preference of the user, i.e. the bag can be used for carrying school or work related materials, as a shopping bag, for city explorations or meetings with friends, etc. The brand is based in Finland, but there are several sales points in different locations in Europe as well as online store, thus the target market for the product should be seen as global. Therefore, while creating a new graphic print design for Bagnanas bag the international audience should be considered and the attention needs to be paid to the universal meaning of used graphic elements and symbols. As of my own impression, the customers of Bagnanas brand are young-minded people with wide perspectives and alternative thinking, open-minded and appreciating quality

and sustainability – which is the audience to be targeted with the final product of this project.

As the theory explains, visual image needs to be distinguishable and include elements that immediately catch attention already on the cognitive unconscious level. Therefore such graphic motives as contrasting colours and elements that stand out among others were attempted to be used in the execution of this project. An important factor of all visual communication forms, thus also this graphic print, is creating an emotional response of the viewer, either joy, happiness, frustration, anger or curiosity, so that a link between the design and the viewer could be made. Elements that are familiar or bring back certain memories, or simply make a person stop and think. This product naturally also aims at influencing consumers' emotions, however it is difficult to say prior to the product's launch in what way as the effect depends on individual interpretation of different perceivers.

As the framework for the designing process says, brainstorming and deciding on the motives and all graphic elements to be used in this particular design was an important and time-consuming process. There were many ideas popping-up while thinking about the final product regarding what colours, shapes or symbols should be used, what the graphic picture to be printed on a bag should be about, what topic should it present, what kind of story should it tell - so that it combines the trends and brand's image.

Many ideas were turned into sketches, which helped eliminating the non-working ones and allowed an instant and constant modification of concepts. As the theory says, sketching the ideas on a paper is very important part of the designing process and in practice it turns to be very effective allowing a quick verification of concepts, adding and removing particular elements, or even changing the original idea completely. The default size of the print design is set by Bagnanas to be 41x45 cm for all their prints, thus when turned into a sketch the vision could be fit in this particular frame and planned according to the frame.

Finally, when the preliminary version of the design, including main elements, shapes and their positions in the frame of design were decided the work moved to the design-

ing process. In this case Adobe Illustrator CC was used. Also when creating the final version of the design in the software, numerous modifications were applied. Different graphic elements were constantly being changed, resized or repositioned; one shapes combined with others, new elements being added and removed, experimented to be located differently; colours were played with. It was also a relatively long process before the satisfying result was achieved.

The choice of particular graphic elements and description of the final product of the project is presented in chapter 7.3.

7.2 Following the trends

Watching the trends and being aware of the visual inspirations and factors claimed to be attractive at a given moment are very important in the process of deciding on the elements of a new piece of design. According to the trends predictions presented in chapter 5 of this report there are several motives designers are supposed to follow during next seasons, including freedom in pattern application and spontaneity, combination of contradictory elements and experimentations in creating something new, nature related, floral, exotic and tribal inspirations, digital age motives and relation to global thinking, as well as modern simplicity, clarity and freshness.

Many of the listed trends are contradictory, thus it is not possible to apply many of them in one design. However, they can act as a guideline and help in choosing and combining the right elements, colours and shapes that all together create a well-working and visually appealing piece of design according to the coming seasons' standards. As such the listed trends were seen in case of this project, i.e. as a guideline for creating a graphic print design for a bag that combines motives and colours which make it potentially attractive to customers.

Some particular shapes and colours were decided to be applied in the final product of the project as suggested by the trends listings, but also bearing in mind the objectives and characteristics of existing Bagnanas products, which is an important factor as well. It was concluded that the new product should be created based on some particular trends foreseen for the textile design and on the results of the analysis of current best-

selling Bagnanas models. The aim was to agilely combine possibly many features that could make the new product successful. Also personal preferences and graphic vision of the designer was taken into consideration from the point of view of consumer and potential user of such product.

7.3 Choice of graphic elements

The main motive used in the final design was circle. The idea was to use one simple shape and create a pattern with it, to turn something very simple in something complex and different than the primal form. The aim was to combine and express several different trends that seemed contradictory at first, to find the features common for both summer and winter seasons, as well as to make the product fit the existing line of bags of Bagnanas brand.

When designing the graphic print I decided to combine multiple circles of the same size which when connected allowed to create different shapes based on them. The motive reflects symmetry of geometrical shape, its simplicity but also multi-functionality. I aimed at creating an abstract form which might force the viewer to think about its meaning, catch the attention. The shapes of the design itself are a reflection of each other - the entire print picture consists of two identical reversed shapes build of circles, where part of the space between the crossing lines is filled with colour. Bearing in mind that one of the listed trends for coming seasons are busy patterns with floral and nature related elements I decided to create shapes responding this guideline. The shapes created of circles remind flowers, snowflakes or stars depending on the interpretation and point of view of individual viewer. A folklore accent, being one of the foreseen trends too, is reflected in this design thanks to the shapes created.

Furthermore, designing a pattern using a circle as main theme or tool for it and its repetitive use causing it to have mechanical, automatic and technical character relates to the trend of inspirations found in futuristic/digital aspects and technological development. The final design is on one hand technically simple, but also complex at the same time if looking at the graphic effect achieved. Thus opposites are combined, which is yet another trend followed.

The colours used in this design are based on simplicity. As the result of analysis of most popular and best-selling existing Bagnanas bags models indicates, customers of the brand are more attracted to the products which are quite simple in matters of colour than those multi-coloured. Therefore, following this finding I decided to base the design of my product on one colour being black complimented with a small detail of bright yellow. Black is a universal colour which works well in nearly every situation and at any time, thus it is not surprising that it is listed among the trending colours for the coming seasons. A minor touch of bright shade of yellow, being as well one of foreseen as trendy, was used for colouring few elements, the aim of which was catching the attention of viewers. Such accent of neon colour is clearly distinguishable and easily noticed by consumers, and also brings a contrast and freshness to the design.

Besides the attempt to find a compromise and possibly best connection of presented in earlier chapters trends and analysis results, through this design I aimed at expressing my own creativity and share the reflection that a simple construction can be a base for building something new, innovative and different, for exposing what is hidden. It is possible to notice that simple things have a huge power to create something unexpected and surprising if looked closer.

8 Conclusion

8.1 Summary

The main objectives of this thesis project included presenting the connection between the disciplines of graphic design and visual marketing leading to understanding how to apply designing principles in order to create a visual product that has a power to market itself. By using the term “product’s self-marketing” I mean that with the visual attributes being a main tool of visual marketing, certain products attract attention and influence consumers’ purchase decisions because of the graphic features. Therefore, in case if the product is a graphic design and its main feature lies in visuals it is logical to assume that it automatically becomes a marketer of its own.

In order to create the final product of this thesis being a graphic print design for a bag labelled with the brand created by the project’s commissioning party, Bagnanas, certain aspects had to be learned and particular steps followed. The theory regarding visual marketing and graphics design was gathered, and the connection of the two disciplines was presented. What connects marketing and design is communication; the aim of both disciplines is to communicate a message to the target audience which is easily understandable and which affects consumers’ response, emotions and decisions of purchase. Especially the role of graphic design is highly important in the marketing field as it provides the visual attributes to the product so significant in its promotion. Design is a strategic and commercial tool in execution of every business’s objectives; it creates company’s identity and image, and allows differentiating the product in the market loaded with similar goods. Design creates competitiveness, attracts attention of consumers and stands as a significant contribution in business’s success. (Bruce & Daly 2007.) The role of design in marketing and the way the two disciplines interconnect was explained in this report.

The theoretical part of the report explains also what are the factors influencing the decision making of customers and their choices of particular products over others based on the visual stimuli. The psychological and cognitive processes are described in order to understand the mechanism of liking and ignoring (Tavassoli 2008). Visual perception is a very important aspect affecting consumers’ purchase decisions and general

attention driver. The process of attraction to particular visual elements starts already at the cognitive unconscious level, and there are certain factors in design that allow influencing these reactions making the viewer respond to given visual stimuli. Shapes, colours, symbols, combinations of elements and their position all influence the visual perception and decide on the attractiveness of visual message, thus they should be considered when creating a piece of design. (Malamed 2009.)

Trends, being an important factor to be taken into account in the process of designing, are also presented in this report. Because the final product is a graphic print to be produced on a cotton bag the trends listed regard textile trends for summer 2014 and winter 2014/2015 according to the forecast by Textile View Magazine and View2 Magazine, as well as consumer trends 2014 reflecting the current social, economic and cultural situation in the world. The presentation of the trends acts as a guideline for choosing and matching the contributing elements for the design of the final product and it helped significantly when deciding on the theme and elements to be used in the graphic print.

Furthermore, the analysis of existing, currently available for sale models of Bagnanas bags was conducted in order to define the most popular and best-selling design of the brand. The analysis was based on the sales data provided by the commissioning party, which included the launch date of 27 models of different prints and the dates when first 50 pieces were sold out. Estimation of the period of time needed for selling this particular number of bags of each model allowed drawing a conclusion which prints were most popular. The result of the analysis revealed that customers of the brand prefer simple in matters of colour prints rather than multi-coloured ones, the graphics presenting some abstract, unexpected motives and bags being made of black rather than light colour fabric. The aim of the analysis was also to find out if the theory presented earlier works in practice. Indeed, some of the theoretical aspects, including the cognitive attention towards certain elements like unexpected abstractive combinations of elements or attraction to human faces, were reflected in the analysis result and then taken into consideration when designing the final product.

Finally, when all the theoretical framework, designing features influencing attention, trends and conclusions of the analysis were presented the product was attempted to be created based on them and according to the designing process also described in the report. An important part of designing activity is research and examining the market, target audience and its preferences, the clients background and needs (if applicable), as well as general knowledge about the current global and local affairs. Other steps regard brainstorming the ideas and sketching before the design is being polished and finalized in the designing software. All these steps were followed in this project's product's execution, and it seemed quite natural to do so.

The final product was created according to the theory presented, bearing in mind all the explained rules and factors, as well as combining the trends and design conclusions drawn from the analysis of Bagnanas most popular prints. The attempt was to combine all the best features and apply the learned principles in the best possible way, so that the product itself would have a chance to become successful and sell well. The process of creating the product is described in the report presenting the chosen elements and the justification of particular choices. Naturally there are reasons why certain elements were chosen and applied in this particular design product, and, as mentioned, the attempt of the project was to combine best features to create a product that attracts attention of the audience and causes the consumers purchase it. However, the success of the product is dependent on the visual interpretation of the viewers and their decision whether it seems attractive to them or not thus it is fairly difficult to be predicted.

8.2 Main results

The main result of this thesis project is obviously the product – graphic print design, created according to the presented guidelines and as a result of an attempt to apply all the learned theoretical background principles, trends and best features of current bag models of Bagnanas brand.

Presentation of the theories explaining the nature of visual marketing and graphic design resulted in understanding the connection between these two disciplines, particularly the meaning of design in marketing. Understanding how marketing and design activities are linked and cooperate in effective communicating certain messages to the

audience helped in applying the theory into practice when designing the final product. The theoretical framework allowed me to start thinking about the designing process from the perspective of visual communication the goal of which is to convey a message, and to consider cognitive behaviours of the viewers. The psychological aspect of decision making regarding the visual products was well understood and considered in the production of the print design, which I find to be an important part of the project.

The description of the process of designing itself was also a significant part of the theoretical part of the project as it became a framework for the execution of the design creation. Explanation of the designing steps resulted in better organization of the product's production process, speeded it up, made it efficient and effective.

The analysis of the current print designs of Bagnanas brand was a highly valuable element of the project. It helped to find out what are the most popular and best-selling models of the company, which revealed the features the customers are most attracted to. The result of the analysis allowed me to draw conclusions what certain design elements should be used in my own design in order to catch the attention of the audience and make the newly created print potentially become successful.

8.3 Further study suggestions

The disciplines of marketing and design are both very vast and there is a huge research potential in both of them. Especially the interconnection of visual communication and graphic design should be studied more as there is not much scientific knowledge regarding the interplay between the two disciplines available as of the moment. The reference to the cognitive psychology is significant here too.

Furthermore, the technical aspect of designing process, i.e. used tools and techniques could be studied further, besides the psychological side of the process.

Businesswise, the cooperation of specialists in marketing and design might be needed to be researched further in order to find the solution for achieving best and most effective results. Discipline of design management in businesses should be studied more widely.

Regarding the commissioning party and the product of the Bagnanas brand there might be a wider and deeper research needed to be conducted in order to find out the preferences of brand's customers. The questionnaire could be conducted for discovering more precise perception factors deciding on customers' choices of bags with particular print designs over others. The result of such research might help in production of future products and eventually increase the sales. Also, the general perception of the brand and its objectives could be researched for developing the strategy for further growth on local and international markets and building brand's better recognition.

As the product of this thesis project will be decided to be sent for production only after the report is published it might be useful to learn in the future about its sales records in order to measure whether it will be successful or not, thus if the applied factors happen to work in practice.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Sales data of best-selling/selected Bagnanas bags.

A file provided by owners of Bagnanas brand. Data hidden due to confidentiality.

	NAME	Release Date	Print design by	SOLD OUT / 50 pcs	SOLD BY 31.8.2013
1	Poor Kitty: Picky Kitty	01.08.12	Heidi Mattila	x.x.x	
2	3 is a crowd: white	01.08.12	Heidi Mattila	x.x.x	
3	Tuohi	01.08.12	Bagnanas	x.x.x	
4	Alice växer upp	01.08.12	Bagnanas	x.x.x	
5	Tweet White	01.08.12	Jaana Mikkonen	x.x.x	
6	Tweet Black	01.08.12	Jaana Mikkonen	x.x.x	
7	Maristache: white	01.08.12	Bagnanas	x.x.x	
8	1000 woofs	01.08.12	Bagnanas	x.x.x	
9	To Ben and To Jerry	01.08.12	Jonna Koivumäki	x.x.x	
10	Rojo	01.08.12	Diana Beltran Herrera	x.x.x	
11	Matter of Fact	01.08.12	Jenni Seikkula	x.x.x	
12	Indian Summer	01.08.12	Jenni Seikkula	x.x.x	
13	I got it from my mama: rabbit	01.08.12	Bagnanas	x.x.x	
14	Walk the line: white	06.11.12	Bagnanas	x.x.x	
15	I could wear this	06.11.12	Janika Lähdes	x.x.x	
16	Has somebody been there	06.11.12	Janika Lähdes	x.x.x	
17	Organic	06.11.12	Bagnanas	x.x.x	
18	Tame me	06.11.12	Bagnanas	x.x.x	
19	Captain Stubbing	14.05.13	Katja Makkonen	x.x.x	
20	3 is a crowd: black	14.05.13	Heidi Mattila	x.x.x	
21	Walk the line: black	14.05.13	Bagnanas	x.x.x	
	SUMMER COLORS				
22	Maristache YELLOW	14.05.13			xx
23	Maristache BLUE	14.05.13			xx
24	Maristache CORAL	14.05.13			xx
25	BUBBLE PINK	14.05.13			xx
26	OCEAN BLUE	14.05.13			xx
27	MINT GREEN	14.05.13			xx

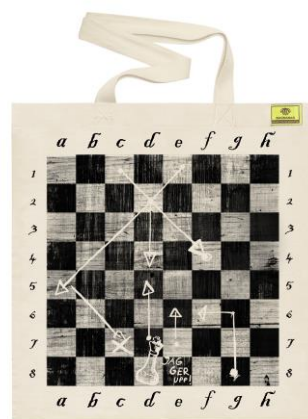
Appendix 2. Bagnanas bags



Poor Kitty: Picky Kitty



Tuohi



Alice Växer Upp



Tweet White



Maristache: White



1000 Woofs



To Ben and To Jerry



Rojo



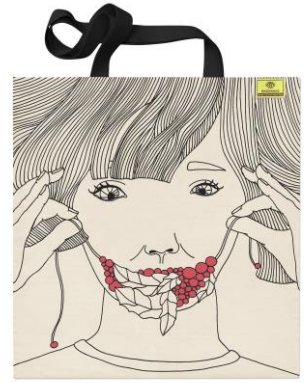
Matter of Fact



Indian Summer



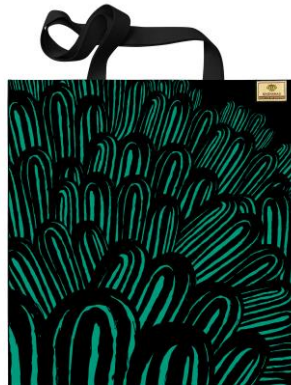
I Got It From My Mama:
Rabbit



I Could Wear This



Has Somebody Been There



Organic



Tame Me



Captain Stubbing



3 is a Crowd: Black



Walk the Line: Black



Maristache Yellow



Maristache Blue



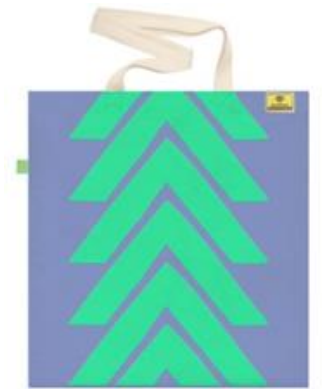
Maristache Coral



Mint Green



Bubble Pink



Ocean Blue

